

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SS-20 NSC-07 SP-03 PRS-01 PA-04

USIA-15 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EUR-25 EA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6527

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR TS US

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REACTION TO TRANSFER OF US PRESIDENTIAL
POWERS

REF: TUNIS 5010

1. OFFICIAL TUNISIAN REACTION TO NEWS OF PRESIDENT FORD'S TAKING OFFICE IS GRATIFICATION AT ASSURANCES THAT USG FOREIGN POLICY WILL CONTINUE ALONG ESTABLISHED LINES. AS GRACEFUL CABLES FROM BOURGUIBA TO BOTH NIXON AND FORD DEMONSTRATE (BOTH PUBLISHED HERE) TUNISIA AND ESPECIALLY BOURGUIBA THOUGHT HIGHLY OF EX-PRESIDENT NIXON, IN LARGE PART OWING TO SUCCESSES IN MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY BUT ALSO WITH RESPECT TO CHINA TALICY AND DETENTE WITH USSR, AND LOOK FORWARD TO FURTHER PROGRESS IN THESE DIRECTIONS UNDER PRES FORD.

2. WE HAVE HEARD PRIVATELY, BUT NOT RPT NOT OFFICIALLY, TUNISIAN SUSPICION THAT FRIENDS OF ISRAEL IN UNITED STATE WERE BEHIND PRESSURE FOR IMPEACHMENT, AND ULTIMATE RESIGNATION OF MAN SEEN AS STATESMAN WHO RESTORED CONFIRMATION OF THE ARAB WORLD IN USG. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND, PRES FORD'S MESSAGE TO PRES BOURGUIBA, SUMMARIZED IN LOCAL PRESS AUGUST 11 (TUNIS 5010) AS

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"ASSURING...THE CONTINUITY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

AND ITS FIRM DETERMINATION TO WORK FOR JUST AND LASTING
PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST" WAS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL.

3. IN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE VEILED AS NEWS STORY SOURCED
TO CIRCLES CLOSE TO MOFA, LOCAL PRESS AUGUST 10 CARRIED
FULL OFFICIAL REACTION, OPENS WITH "SHARP REGRET AT
THE DEPARTURE OF PRES NIXON IN DRAMATIC CIRCUMSTANCES"
AND NOTES THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC EVENTS
WHICH TRANSPired DURING HIS PRESIDENCY, INCLUDING EAST-
WEST DETENTE, THE OPENING TOWARD CHINA, AND ESPECIALLY
THE CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS MIDDLE EAST POLICY "OF
WHICH THE LEAST ONE CAN SAY IS THAT IT WAS MARKED BY
COMPLETE INCOMPREHENSION WITH RESPECT TO THE ARAB
WORLD AND PARTICULARLY THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

4. COMMUNIQUE CONTINUES THAT "TUNISIA IS CONVINCED
THAT NEW PRES FORD WILL CONTINUE THE EFFORTS OF HIS
PREDECESSOR, CARRIED OUT ON BEHALF OF THE GREAT AMERICAN
NATION." IN THIS CONNECTION MOFA SOURCES ARE CITED
AS GREATLY RELIEVED BY NEWS THAT SECY KISSINGER WILL
STAY ON.

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